bill read 19 Dec 1691.

Some few Reasons against the Bill for the Court of Conscience *in* Westminster *and the Liberties thereof.*

THo the Title of a Bill brought to the Lords from the House of Commons be a Bill for recovery of small Debts, and relieving of poor Debtors at *Westminster* and the Liberties thereof, Yet it is the same in substance and effect as that was last Sessions for a Court of Conscience in *Southwark*, which was upon a solemn debate thrown out of the Lords House; And 'tis presumed the Reasons are the same now as were then. For,

First, Multiplicity of Courts is a great grievance to the Subject.

Secondly, It takes away the Common Law, which is every mans Birthright, and introduces an Arbitrary Jurisdiction.

Thirdly, It destroys Courts Barons, and all Inferior Courts, where Debts under 40 *s.* are properly Triable, depriving Persons of Quality of their Power and Authority, and settling it in Shopkeepers and Tradesmen.

Fourthly, It takes away the Kings Jurisdiction of His Majesties Palace, Courts, and Marshalsea, which is as ancient as any in *England*, and very useful and necessary for recovery of small Debts, the Costs therein being very small, and the recovery quick and easie.

Fifthly, It will occasion frequent perjuries in regard the Plaintiffs and Defendants are thereby to swear for themselves, besides many other mischiefs and inconveniencies, which, upon passing this Bill into a Law, must inevitably ensue.

And whereas the design of this Bill seems to be to hinder the expending of great Costs and Charges at Law for recovery of small Debts Now in Answer to that, The Law has provided already Inferior Courts, where the Charges are but small, and the Recovery quick and easie. And if the Defendant upon the first Summons or Notice of a Suit against him, tender to the Plaintiff what is justly due to him, if the Plaintiff refuseth to accept of it, but will (notwithstanding such tender) willfully proceed, It shall be at the Plaintiffs own Costs and Charges by the Course and Practise of the said Courts. And in case poor persons do either sue, or be sued there, they are admitted in *Forma Pauperis*, and pay no Fees at all. And all persons sued for 40 *s.* or under, are immediately discharged without Bail.

REASONS against the BILL For a Court of Conſcience In *Weſtminſter* and the Liberties thereof.